

does not cover the cost of nursing home care, a key thing to remember. Secondly, the program that calls...that covers the cost of individuals who do not have the assets or the income to pay for their institutionalization is Medicaid. In order to qualify for Medicaid, an individual has to fall below a particular asset level and a particular income level. In the case of a married couple when only one of those spouses is institutionalized, the entire income and the entire assets have to fall below a particular level for the institutionalized spouse to receive governmental assistance through Medicaid. What we are seeing happen in increasingly large numbers are that a couple will save, work hard all of their lives, build up some assets, build up some money to take care of their needs in their declining years. One of those individuals goes into a nursing home and the exorbitant cost of nursing home causes those assets to be dwindled down to the point that prior to...that they're all gone, and prior to the time that we can offer any governmental assistance to help that individual that is, in fact, institutionalized, the well spouse has to spend down all of the...all of the assets that they have accumulated and also has to contribute all of their...most of their income to the care of the institutionalized spouse prior to the time that the government will come in. I passed out a fact sheet on spousal impoverishment here. On the bottom of that page, what specifically does the Medicaid program require? The Medicaid program requires that the couple, one, in the month of separation use income and assets in either spouse's name unless the combined amounts of both spouses are below Medicaid eligibility levels. In other words, they have to count the assets and income of the well spouse against the eligibility requirements. Number two, after the first month, they must spend all of the savings, both jointly held and in the name of the institutionalized spouse, except for \$2,700. After the first month, contribute all of the institutionalized spouse's income to the cost of nursing home care except \$25 a month for the spouse in the nursing home for his or her personal needs and no more than \$340 a month for the spouse at home if he or she has no income in his or her name. In other words, they've got to spend themselves down to a poverty level prior to the...prior to the Medicaid coming in. What this would do...this bill would do, it would allow the couple to shield a portion of their assets. They would, first of all, let's take the assumption that they have accumulated a quarter of a million dollars in assets. This bill would still require that couple to spend down to the \$50,000 level. They would require them to spend down